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SUBJECT: EGYPT: REACTION TO TIP TIER 2 WATCH LIST ACTION  
PLAN

REF: SECSTATE 75360

Sensitive but unclassified, not for Internet distribution.

¶1. (SBU) On July 22 we delivered reftel trafficking-in-persons (TIP) action plan to MFA Deputy Assistant Minister for Human Rights Wael Aboulmagd, emphasizing that the GOE needs to make measurable progress in victim protection and in prosecutions of, and a comprehensive legal framework to prosecute, traffickers in order for us to raise Egypt from the Tier 2 Watch List in the 2009 TIP report. Aboulmagd said that "we have the same goals" and affirmed Egypt's commitment to fighting TIP, noting that the GOE inter-ministerial anti-TIP committee - which the MFA chairs - has a draft comprehensive anti-TIP law that it will begin discussing throughout the GOE interagency "soon" before presenting it to parliament in the future. (Note: The next parliamentary session begins in November. End note.) He noted that the draft law, which draws from similar legislation in other countries and international models, lays out not only punishments for traffickers but also specifies how victims of trafficking should be protected. He added that Egypt currently lacks NGOs and victim service centers focused on victims of TIP. Aboulmagd claimed that experts at that Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Protection Project said the draft is "as close to perfect as possible."

¶2. (SBU) However, Aboulmagd emphasized that the GOE will not gear its efforts to the timetable of the USG's TIP report. He said that Egypt is spending a "disproportionate" amount of time on TIP in comparison to "more urgent" human rights issues, such as freedom of expression and women's rights, particularly given that Egypt "likely does not have a big problem" in comparison to other developing countries. He noted that the U.S. TIP criteria "is not universal," and that some in the Egyptian public are accusing the GOE being beholden to a "western-driven agenda" on TIP. He re-affirmed that the GOE will continue its anti-TIP efforts and would like to move off of the Tier 2 Watch List, but said that "this is not a priority for us."

¶3. (SBU) Comment: Anti-TIP momentum is building in Egypt, and our efforts to provide anti-TIP training for police officers through the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for prosecutors through the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), and for Egyptian interagency TIP officials through a State Department International Visitor Program (IVP) have been well-received and have sparked further interest. It remains to be seen, however, if the GOE can build upon this momentum to make substantive improvements in its anti-TIP legal framework and victim-protection regime.  
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